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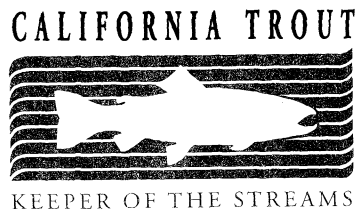
Subject: Comments on the California Water Plan Update, Bulletin 160

I would like to start by commending the Department of Water Resources for your positive outreach with public meetings and your long lead time preparation for the next iteration of the California Water Plan. I understand the public meetings were productive discussions and I regret missing the Santa Barbara meeting near my home.

California Trout is a statewide fisheries organization whose mission is to protect native trout and steelhead and the waters they inhabit. Our organization is a member of the Environmental Water Caucus – a coalition of environmental groups that is trying to move CALFED toward environmentally friendly and sustainable water use solutions for the state.

California Trout shares a vision with many of the leading conservation organizations that make up the Environmental Water Caucus, and it is a vision that we would like the water planners in the Department of Water Resources to adopt. The vision is that your department must view California water as a finite and a sustainable resource, and that the current economically wasteful and harmful uses of California water must change. We believe that the Department, partly through the California Water Plan, must become a champion for sustainable and efficient uses of this public resource and must become the managers of water demand for the state.





Our vision of sustainable and economically wise use would include the following features:

- *Required* water conservation goals and accomplishments by each of the three main water use sectors – urban, agricultural, and industrial – in place of the current voluntary programs.
- Special emphasis to cause significant changes in water use practices by agriculture, including tiered pricing structures, investment incentives for the use of higher technology irrigation equipment, and incentives for fallowing marginal land during drought periods.
- Gradual reduction and eventual elimination of water subsidies, which is a disincentive to the wise use of water.
- Changes to the CVP and SWP contractual commitments that reflect the reality of lessened water availability for water contractors.
- Facilitating the use of market priced water transfers – appropriately constrained to avoid excessive profits from currently subsidized water – while still providing a profit incentive to agriculture to market its conserved water to urban users.
- Heavy reliance on ground water storage as the alternative to building more ecosystem-damaging surface storage.
- Legislative changes to facilitate water transfers and controls on groundwater usage.
- Treatment of agricultural return flows and incentives for recycling water by all users.





The cumulative impact of the above steps would also move the Department into the more proactive position of managing demand for water in place of the current mode of reacting to perceived demand for California water.

A similar positive vision is stated in the outstanding report published by the Pacific Institute, entitled *California Water 2020*. It requires "...no significant new supply infrastructures to be built, nor any drastic advances in technology." As also stated in the report: "No 'heroic' or extraordinary actions are required of any individual or sector. The changes necessary to achieve a sustainable water future for California can be brought about by encouraging and guiding positive trends that are already under way."

I know that you have heard these thoughts before, but I encourage your Department, through the California Water Plan, to become the champions for a sustainable water future for California. It is the only positive way to insure equity and economic rationality for current and future Californians.



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